# INDELİBLE TRAUMA

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In the muddy expanse of the road, beaten by the biting winter cold and lashing rain, everything blurred in the dim light. The downpour, relentless since morning, had smothered every inch of the earth, turning the village's main road into a thick mire. As dusk gathered, the hour creeping toward seven or eight, a child—covered head to toe in mud—hurried across the path. With every step he took, the thick sludge squelched shut, swallowing his footprints with a stubborn, sucking sound. A few stray tears trickled from his eyes, washing streaks down his cheeks, as he trudged forward, coughing, his hands trembling violently from the chill. In the heavy silence that trailed him, he was lost in thoughts so distant he scarcely noticed how time dragged on.

He was mere minutes away from his doorstep when the world around him shifted violently. A blinding flash of light flooded the space, striking with the force of a physical blow. With a slow, ragged gasp that caught in his throat, he was severed from everything and everyone, swallowed instantly by a sudden, consuming darkness. Time seemed to stop. In that absolute void, he sensed something looming terrifyingly close; then, a heavy hand clamped over his mouth, smothering his breath. Drowning in a split second of pure panic, suffocating and lost, he could do nothing but squeeze his eyes tightly shut.

When he finally opened them, his reality had been shattered. He found himself in one of the abandoned, desolate corners of the village. His eyes stared ahead in a dazed blur; his hands were bound tightly together. In the gloom, a faceless silhouette—an unknown assailant—subjected him to unspeakable horrors. No matter how fiercely the child struggled, his frail resistance was entirely in vain. By the time dawn broke, the innocence of his world was gone forever. Ultimately, that small, fragile child was dumped somewhere near the threshold of his own home. All around him, bathed in the morning light, lay a serene, indifferent stillness—as if nothing had happened at all.

Ten years passed. The world was spinning forward at a breakneck pace; technology had evolved into a beacon of hope for humanity's future generations. Life had become more comfortable, vastly improved by innovations that once seemed like mere fantasies. At the end of the street, the local psychotherapy center was closing its doors for the day. A twenty-year-old young man stepped out, having just concluded his session. He had made a momentous decision to volunteer for a classified scientific study. He hurried toward the laboratory, knowing that today would be one of the most pivotal days of his existence. With his thick-rimmed glasses and a haircut perfectly in tune with the era's latest trends, he possessed a quiet, striking presence.

The laboratory was a familiar place to him by now, but today the atmosphere crackled with something entirely new. The ultimate pinnacle of 21st-century technology—the mind transfer and preservation device—was finally ready, and he was its inaugural volunteer. He would be the very first human subject tested under the codename A.R.Z.U. ("Artificial Retention of Zonal Uploading"). This wasn't merely an experiment on one individual; it was a profound leap that possessed the power to alter the very destiny of mankind.

In the laboratory, everything was flawlessly prepared. Arzu took one final look at the world. Whatever he thought or felt remained his alone—he only asked himself: "Will the world ever truly awaken again?" No one could know the answer, but by volunteering for this procedure, he was ready to leave behind a beacon of hope for future generations.
The cables wired to his brain channeled all his neural data into a prism. Near dawn, once the entirety of his data had been transferred, Arzu's physical body was left hollowed out. He was now nothing more than a shadow. A vacant, lifeless shell—yet the memories, the consciousness, the connection to the world that once resided within him; everything was now gathered within the prism, awaiting activation.
Arzu had now become a monumental figure for all of humanity. Through him, a new era was dawning. Many placed their hopes on this technological revelation, dreaming of constructing a new world. But, inevitably, there would be those who wished to halt this progression. The threat of political and economic warfare loomed on the horizon, for no one was willing to relinquish their grasp on such profound power. Yet Arzu, though his physical eyes remained closed, had taken the first step into a new future. From this moment on, his name would be remembered through every epoch, by every soul, and the future of mankind would be built upon the foundations of this uploaded consciousness.
Fifty-four years passed. In that span of time, the world bore witness to countless wars, revolutions, coups, and uprisings. Yet simultaneously, humanity achieved colossal strides in culture and technology. People were no longer what they once were. The boundary between the concepts of life and death had practically vanished. Semi-immortality had become a reality, made possible by new solutions forged through technological and biological research. This was a revolution applied not only to the flesh but equally to the human mind and consciousness. The science of mind transfer had evolved to such an extent that humanity could now preserve its biology and sentience within the digital realm. Some individuals uploaded their souls and memories into

"cloud" networks, able to download themselves into new bodies at will. However, these advancements dragged severe social and ethical dilemmas into the light. This technology began to belong exclusively to specific echelons—the wealthy and the powerful—as it was tightly controlled through limited resources in the wake of endless conflicts. Even those fighting for immortality found themselves ensnared in a web of manipulation and political deceit.

All these shifts marked the dawn of a new epoch for humanity. Life would never be the same again. The borders between mind and body had been erased, and immortality had become a reality for many. Yet alongside it, the raw power of this new technology drove deep wedges into society, spawning severe stratification and brutal power struggles. People were no longer simply fighting to "survive," but warring over new lives and new identities.

As humanity scoured the world for ways to prolong its existence and safeguard its consciousness, Arzu's name still whispered through the masses. His past—and the genesis of this technology—remained the most potent symbol dictating the future of the world. Over all these years, perhaps no one truly knew what state Arzu was actually in, but his existence formed the very bedrock of all these advancements. Arzu had been a witness to the collapse of time, the ascent of technology, and the most monumental upheavals in human history, but now, his essence lingered solely within a digital memory.

The General entered the meeting room with his usual menacing stride. With every step, he radiated a crushing intensity, as if he were marching directly onto a battlefield. Among the attendees were officials of various ranks and government representatives, all waiting in dead silence for his arrival.

"As we are all aware, there is an issue, and it remains unresolved," the General's words instantly seized the attention of everyone in the room. They had been holding their breath, waiting for him to speak.

"General, sir, investigations indicate that the root of this matter traces back to something from long ago," one figure interjected, his tone laced with extreme caution. He glanced around the room, attempting to explain the depth of the current crisis.

The General cut in, his inner tension bleeding into his voice:

"I do not care how long ago it started. I just want it solved, and fast."

His voice was so harsh and unyielding it felt like a physical blow to everyone present.

A brief, heavy silence fell over the room. Every person there knew they had no choice but to comply with his demand instantly.

"Yes, sir." Before long, they all replied without a hint of objection, exchanging nervous glances.
The General scrutinized everyone in the room with piercing eyes. He paused for a fraction of a second before delivering a sharp question:
"Did you find the man I asked for?" His tone had grown even more cutting, sounding like a dire warning.
"Yes." The answer was brief and precise, barely leaving the speaker's lips.
"Good. Bring him in!"
As the automated sensor doors slid open, a man in a long black trench coat stepped inside. The man's left arm, gleaming with a metallic silver finish, was a stark testament to how far technology had advanced—and proof that he himself was a product of this cybernetic era. He removed his hat, and the General stared at him with a mix of awe and scrutiny. The man's right eye was missing, replaced by a glowing red optic sensor. This was no ordinary human; he was a highly augmented being, perhaps more machine than any of the generations that preceded him.
As the General continued to observe him wordlessly, the man sat down quietly across from him, perfectly still, awaiting his orders. At that moment, a dossier thick with data was handed to the General. Fixing his eyes on the paper, the General began to read.
"Born in 2057, Yusibov..." The words were merely the prologue of a heavy past. Yusibov had entered the military academy at an early age and saw active, brutal combat in the 3rd World War of 2071. However, the war had dealt him devastating blows, and severe injuries had eventually forced him out of the military. After his recovery, he forged a different path. He dedicated four years to unraveling criminal cases. The most astonishing fact was not just how many cases he had solved, but that there was absolutely no crime he had failed to uncover.
The General turned his gaze back to Yusibov and spoke with a grim expression:
"Yusibov, the situation is extremely critical. A virus has infiltrated our entire technological infrastructure, threatening to deal a fatal blow to our security. Can you trace the source of this virus?"
Yusibov remained silent for a few seconds, contemplating, before replying with a hint of unease:
"General, sir, it’s not that simple. The virus is crafted with immense precision; tracking its footprint will be difficult."
The General interrupted him, his voice thick with frustration:
"Do not tell me it’s difficult! You are one of the best specialists in this country. I need to know who leaked this virus within forty-eight hours."

A fleeting look of tension and concern crossed Yusibov’s face, but he weighed his words carefully:
"I will investigate it. But I cannot guarantee that—"
The General cut him off again, barking his order with even greater ferocity:
"Do not give me guarantees, give me results! This is a matter of national security."
Yusibov took a deep breath, then bowed his head with grim determination:
"Yes, General. I will mobilize all my resources and I will find the source."
Slightly relieved by Yusibov’s resolute answer, the General kept his eyes locked on him and said:
"I know you can do this. The intel you have is of paramount importance. Remember, this virus won't just cripple a system; it will strike at the very future of the entire nation."

Yusibov nodded and immediately rose from his seat to commence his work. He felt fully prepared to pour every ounce of his focus into this mission. For him, this was no mere assignment; it was a matter of safeguarding the entire system, perhaps even ensuring the continued existence of the nation itself. In forty-eight hours, the results would emerge, or the fate of everything would be irreversibly altered.
Yusibov's workspace was cold and sterile. Only the pale glow of the computer monitor illuminated the room. Cascades of numbers and dates scrolled rapidly across the screen. He was meticulously reviewing the chronological data archives of the central mainframe. Renowned for his surgical precision and professionalism, Yusibov analyzed every detail without straining his eye. Suddenly, a specific date on the screen arrested his attention—a black data point logged in March of 2023. This data anomaly stood out starkly from the rest of the files. Yusibov immediately reached for his interface and attempted to access it. A brief prompt flashed across the screen: "Security code required."
Yusibov's gaze locked onto the monitor for a moment. Why was this data concealed like this? Why did it demand a specialized security protocol? This file was nothing like the others. After repeated, futile attempts, he could not breach the file's encryption. He decided to dig deeper. Meanwhile, several distinct thoughts began to coalesce in his mind. The year 2023 was the very epoch of the mind transfer revolution. In those years, the dawn of neural and consciousness technologies had marked a profound turning point in human history. Could the concealment and heavy encryption of this data be tied to covert operations or specific existential threats from that era?

Yusibov mentally reviewed the pivotal events of those years. The mind transfer revolution in early 2023 had resulted in the uploading of human consciousness into digital environments, bringing humanity one step closer to true immortality. Though this technology had unlocked unprecedented possibilities, it had also sparked massive ethical and security dilemmas. That year saw catastrophic leaks of personal neural imprints, interstate conflicts, and, most crucially, severe anxieties regarding how this technology was being weaponized.
He pondered for a few moments, then gathered his resolve. This recorded black data point sharpened his focus on the investigation. Stitching every fragmented detail together in his mind, he resolved to follow this trail. If this classified information was connected to one of the most critical events of that era, then the origin of the current virus—and the looming threat—might be rooted deep within that very past.
Yusibov's eye fixed on the flickering screen as he took a deep breath. He was one step closer to his goal. But first, he had to discover what lay behind this security code. He immediately infiltrated the relevant network, searching for vectors to bypass the encryption. Only time would tell if he was heading in the right direction.
Inputting his own specialized override codes, Yusibov activated the neural mainframe that had been preserved in stasis since 2023. Seconds later, the system's proprietary protocols initiated, and Arzu began to slowly materialize. As the digital rendering compiled on the screen, Arzu was resurrected in a new physical form. When his eyes finally opened, the drastic changes surrounding him left him in absolute shock. How profoundly the world had transformed over the decades! The technology, the architecture, the very appearance of humanity—everything was alien, novel, and entirely extraordinary.

Lifting his head to look around, Arzu froze entirely. Confronted by all these radical innovations and the bizarre environment, he could only whisper in a trembling voice:
"How... how is this possible?"
Yusibov stood quietly beside him and calmly readied a specially synthesized neuro-stabilizer. A few seconds later, he injected it directly into Arzu’s vein. This would dull Arzu's severe state of shock, helping to bring him under better control.
"Easy now, everything is going to be fine," Yusibov murmured, his voice low and soothing.
As Arzu slowly began to gather himself, Yusibov maintained his experienced, watchful oversight. Minutes later, Arzu managed to regain

his composure, though the sheer terror and bewilderment were still vividly etched across his face.
Yusibov frowned, his mind racing. It dawned on him that the extraordinarily concealed black data point was identical to the neural data of Arzu's transfer. Yusibov had initially viewed Arzu with a degree of suspicion, but he now realized he needed to assess the situation much more meticulously. So much extreme secrecy, so many suspicious variables... It all compelled him to dig deeper into the void. He decided to conduct a profound analysis of all of Arzu's data and archives. Initially, his focus had been solely on the restoration and integration of Arzu's consciousness, but now he had to scrutinize the true purpose and consequences of Arzu's transfer. He finally understood that everything was far more covert and intricate than it seemed. Adopting a more cautious approach, Yusibov resolved to uncover every buried detail. This wasn't merely a matter concerning Arzu's past; it could be the very linchpin for the future of humanity. Just as Arzu was thrust into this new world, he inadvertently became the perfect catalyst for Yusibov's investigation. Yusibov knew this course of action would trigger massive repercussions, but it was already far too late to turn back.
To obtain a deep-scan electronic cerebral tomography of Arzu, Yusibov took him to his closest, most trusted underground contact: Doc Fidi.
"Greetings, Fidi Bilet. How are you holding up?"
"Still kicking, old partner. At your service, as always. What do you need?" Fidi replied smoothly.
"Take a look at the subconscious data of the kid beside me. There might be some crucial intel hidden in there."
As Doc Fidi meticulously analyzed Arzu's brainwaves, he stumbled upon a bizarre anomaly. Lines of malicious viral code were flashing sequentially across the diagnostic screen.
"Yusibov, come take a look at this," Doc Fidi said, his expression instantly turning grave. "This virus file has been embedded into Arzu's memory with such absolute mastery that it has essentially become a living part of his brain."

Yusibov stepped closer and stared at the screen. They delved deeper into the scans. A short time later, the grim truth surfaced—that malicious file had been planted on the exact traumatic night when Arzu was only ten years old.
"So, this is no coincidence," Yusibov muttered. "Someone uploaded this virus directly into Arzu's brain on that very night."

The encryption key to this virus could only be known by its master. Yusibov realized it was time to bring this revelation to the General. Yusibov met with the General, his expression dead serious as he began: "General, sir, I have obtained critical intelligence regarding the origin of the virus. The payload was actually planted covertly inside Arzu back in 2013. It lay dormant in a passive state for ten years. During the experiment in 2023, it was activated, and it began to spread through Arzu."

The General, visibly tense, demanded: "And who holds the full decryption key for this virus?"

Yusibov answered with absolute certainty: "Only the original assailant. The virus is architected in such a way that only the person who planted it can unlock the full code and assume control of the system."

The General pondered for a moment. "So, we need to find out exactly who infiltrated our network?"

"Sixty-four years have passed," Yusibov replied. "It isn't even known if the man who did this is still alive today."

"You raise a very crucial point," the General admitted. "For now, continue your investigations. We have no other choice."

Yusibov's prolonged investigations yielded nothing but dead ends. The usually cold-blooded and calculated Yusibov was beginning to lose his grip. However, he soon began working with the technical crew in the laboratory on a specialized device designed to trace the past. The device was heavily restricted by the technological limitations of that era —it could only render general scenes and raw coordinates of past events, unable to pierce through to the finer details...

The lights in Yusibov’s quarters were off, the screens bathing the room in a cascade of moving images. It was the dead of night. His eyes were bloodshot and exhausted, yet fiercely determined. In every playback, he watched Arzu's traumatic moments over and over again.

On the monitors, images of Arzu’s childhood, his agonizing cries, and his tears looped endlessly. It was as if Yusibov was desperately hunting for the perpetrator's shadow within every single frame. The pen in his hand trembled; his ashtray was overflowing.

"I will find you," he whispered fiercely. Yet, the ghost remained unfound.

Yusibov’s ultimate plan was unorthodox and incredibly complex. He had partitioned the entire data structure of his own brain into two distinct halves. One half would remain within his original organic body, while the other would be securely stored within a custom-built mainframe hidden in the basement of his old safe house.

The objective was crystal clear: should any existential threat arise against him in the future, his original neural data would be purged. Simultaneously, the backup concealed in the basement would activate, instantly reverting Yusibov to his past state. This had evolved into his core philosophy of life—always staying one step ahead, foreseeing the danger, and, when necessary, hitting "reset" to start over. Yusibov considered this his ultimate survival strategy. It was as if he were preparing to travel through time itself. And crucially, this entire failsafe was programmed to execute completely automatically.
Years slipped by. Yusibov eventually became bedridden with a severe wasting illness, yet he was far from ready to die. Confined to his bed, he relentlessly continued his investigations, aided by the ever-advancing technology surrounding him. Meanwhile, Arzu went on with his own life, dropping by to visit Yusibov from time to time.
During those years, a new cyber-baron rose to infamy in the Underworld. Although his real name was Elvin Ahmedov, the streets knew him only as "Mastan." Mastan had his hands deep in every sector, from state politics to the black market. He now had to fulfill a divine mandate to ensure that his long-achieved success—the system he had transferred years ago—would never function again. This very system, annihilated by the virus, which had driven Yusibov into depression and resulted in the General's death, was all part of Mastan's grand design.
Mastan’s plan had been devastatingly simple: send an operative back in time to implant the virus into Arzu, a payload engineered to cripple the nation's mainframe systems when the time was right. To execute this, there had been one massive hurdle, but Mastan had resolved it long ago—a time machine. His private syndicate of rogue scientists had successfully built it. Everything was in place, save for one missing piece: he needed the absolute best neural-control physician in the country to safely send someone back through time. And that man was Doc Fidi.
The light in the room was dim, shadows swallowing every corner. Baron Mastan appeared relaxed, but a cold, menacing gleam burned in his eyes. Doc Fidi stood before him, visibly uneasy, his fingers twitching nervously.

Mastan:
(In a quiet, cold tone) You know, Fidi, leaning on old friends is always a good thing. But even friendship has a price, doesn't it?
Doc Fidi:
(Stammering hesitantly) Mastan, I can't... I can't betray Yusibov. Our friendship...

Mastan:
(Leaning forward slightly) Friendship? Yeah, pretty words. But you know, to survive in this world, you don't need friendship; you need smart choices. What did Yusibov ever give you? Trust? Respect? Are those going to be enough to let you walk away from this table alive?
Doc Fidi:
(Remains silent, lowering his head in defeat.)
Mastan:
(Softening his voice a fraction) I am your old friend. We've seen a lot together. Help me, and not only does our friendship continue, but I will shield you from the fallout. As for Yusibov... Fine, he wouldn't wage war on you. But understand this: if you stay out of my plan, it will be impossible to protect him, or yourself.
Doc Fidi:
(Hesitantly) But... what is it you want from me?
Mastan:
(Smiling as he studies him) Something very small. You will simply do your job. You will inject the nanorobots into his body. In return, I will open my doors to you as a man I can trust. Think about it, Fidi. In this world, you have to pick a side. You are either with the victors, or... (raising his voice) the defeated.
Doc Fidi:
(Raising his eyes, looking anxious) But this... this isn't right, Mastan. I took an oath. I swore to help people.
Mastan:
(Slams the table violently, then regains his icy composure) An oath! What did the world ever give you when it reminded you of that oath, Fidi? I am your salvation. I am your future. Now make your choice: either stand by my side, or see exactly where your precious conscience leads you.
(Doc Fidi draws a ragged, trembling breath. He hesitates, but finally, with a slow, heavy nod of his head, he signals his compliance. A faint, chilling smile creeps onto Mastan's lips.)
Before leaving, Fidi asked one final question: why did Yusibov, of all people, have to be the victim?
Mastan replied: "For the longest time, he has been the only man to come close to trashing my grand design. Perhaps he always will be, in every time loop. Who can truly know? Maybe it is simply written in his destiny... a divine sacrifice!"

A room resembling a clinical ward. Everywhere is sterile and freezing cold. Yusibov is strapped securely to an operating table. His eyes are

locked onto Doc Fidi, brimming with absolute dread and the sting of betrayal. Doc Fidi is prepping the surgical equipment, his hands trembling visibly. Mastan stands off to the side, quietly smoking a cigar, a look of deep, sadistic satisfaction etched across his face.
Yusibov: (Looking at Doc Fidi, his voice weak and raspy) Fidi... you wouldn't betray me. This is a joke, right? You wouldn't just forget our friendship...
Doc Fidi: (At a loss for words, averting his gaze from Yusibov) I... I have no other choice, Yusibov.
Yusibov: (With rising fury and despair) How much did they pay you to stab me in the back, Fidi? How much? I trusted you! Our friendship...
Mastan: (Interrupting the exchange, his tone dripping with mockery) Ah, what a touching, emotional scene! But it's utterly pointless, Yusibov. Friendship... is a worthless currency these days. Fidi has already made his choices. Now, knowing that your consciousness will remain fully awake should serve as a nice little consolation for you. After all, you will be able to fully comprehend your own sacrifice.
Doc Fidi: (Breathing heavily, turning to Mastan) Mastan, maybe... maybe this is unnecessary. He's already defeated. There is no need to make him suffer any further!
Mastan: (Laughing cruelly) Unnecessary? This is part of the lesson I've prepared for you, Fidi. You need to learn exactly how dangerous it is to trust people. Besides, Yusibov must feel everything; he must understand it all. Consider this my final "gift" to him.
Yusibov: (A bitter smile forming on his lips) Fidi, you're just a pawn in Mastan's game. Do you even realize that? You will never be on the winning side.
Doc Fidi: (Lowering his head, letting his arms drop limply to his sides) Forgive me, Yusibov...
(Doc Fidi activates the machinery. The surgical nanobots begin to swarm and operate around Yusibov. Mastan relishes the scene, savoring every excruciating second. Yusibov's agonized screams fill the room, but Doc Fidi shuts his eyes tightly and turns his head away.)
The time machine laboratory. Doc Fidi watches as Yusibov’s half-dead, mangled body is loaded into the temporal capsule. Mastan continues to orchestrate the proceedings with a calm, tyrannical demeanor.
Mastan: (Staring down at Yusibov's unconscious form) We are sending him back to 2013. The target: Arzu. You know exactly what to do, Yusibov—or rather, the machines inside you do.
Doc Fidi: (Hesitating once again) Mastan, this... this is going too far. Enough is enough! He's practically dead. Why are you torturing him more?

Mastan: (Glaring furiously at Doc Fidi) Do you still not understand? This is not just a game. My message must be carried into the past to conquer the future. When the virus is implanted into Arzu's brain, it will construct a network through him—a network I will ultimately control. And Yusibov is merely the vessel for this process.
Doc Fidi: (Lowering his voice to a whisper) You are a monster...
Mastan: (Laughing) Perhaps. But you're right here in the mud with me, Fidi. Don't ever forget that.
(Yusibov is sealed inside the time machine. The core powers up, and in a blinding flash of light, Yusibov vanishes into the time stream.)

The year 2013, a small village.
The village is peaceful, the chirping of birds filling the air. Arzu is walking across a meadow, heading toward his home. Suddenly, Yusibov appears in the distance. He approaches with erratic, robotic movements. His eyes are entirely devoid of expression, but a fierce struggle is raging within him.
Yusibov: (A muffled voice screaming within his mind, suppressed by cybernetic control) Stop! I can't do this... This isn't me...
System Override: (A cold, mechanical voice echoing in his skull) Proceed. Execute the mission. Approach Arzu and inject the virus.
(No matter how violently Yusibov resists, he cannot break free from the system's control. Arzu does not recognize him and backs away in terror.)
Arzu: (Voice trembling) Who are you? What do you want?
(Against his own will, Yusibov lunges at Arzu. The boy screams and thrashes, but it is of no use; he cannot escape his destiny. Just as Mastan planned, Yusibov forcibly implants the virus into Arzu's brain, and immediately afterward, his own physical body expires, collapsing lifeless to the ground.)
At that exact moment, in the year 2077, deep within the bowels of the basement, an old stasis capsule—having rested in absolute silence for years—suddenly illuminates. Yusibov’s backup body begins to stir. Lying on the freezing metal, the body twitches and awakens. He opens his eyes, but at first, he can make out nothing. Everything is a blur—both his vision and his memories.
Then, the fragmented memories detonate in his mind like an explosion: the ultimate betrayal in the past, the unspeakable horror inflicted upon Arzu, Mastan's ruthless laughter... and, most devastating of all, the realization that he himself had been the monster at the very center of it all.

Yusibov (internally):
"It was me. It was me... I wasn't just a puppet in that tyrant's hands. I had lost my free will, yes, but that is just an excuse. The machines controlled my body, but my mind—my soul—felt every single second of it. I touched Arzu. I did that. So why... why am I trying to justify it to myself?"
He attempts to stand, but his body is incredibly frail. Every muscle feels the crushing weight of the years. He leans a trembling hand against the rusted wall, his breathing ragged. His inner voice refuses to be silenced.
Yusibov (internally):
"I planned for this. I foresaw all of it. I knew Fidi might betray me. I knew Mastan could turn me into a weapon. But I never imagined he would go this far. That I would touch Arzu... no, I can't believe it. I can't be this weak! But then why does this guilt feel like it's destroying me from the inside?"
His eyes dart around the gloomy basement. Everything feels simultaneously real and like a fever dream.
"All these years... these events... are they real, or am I just dreaming? Maybe this basement is my hell. An endlessly looping purgatory of regret... But no, I laid out this plan! The virus implanted into Arzu's brain... it is the only way to destroy Mastan. That was my purpose! But... is sacrificing myself enough to achieve that goal? What about Arzu's sacrifice? Is he not my sin?"
With weak, shuffling steps, he walks toward an old, tarnished mirror. The glass is rusted and cloudy, but he can make out his reflection. He stares at himself, yet he does not recognize the face looking back.
Yusibov (internally):
"This isn't me. This is a monster. I am not a monster! I set out on this path to be a savior, but in the end, I became the one who created the greatest victim. Arzu… poor Arzu. He hadn't done anything to me. How can I ever forget the sheer terror in his eyes?!"
For a moment, his thoughts halt. He takes a deep breath, and his gaze hardens into steel.
"There is no path to forgiveness. I know that. But this is not the end. Mastan is still free. He is still playing people like toys. My mission isn't over. If what happened to Arzu didn't end his journey, then it won't end mine either."
He powers up an old terminal in the basement. Mechanical hums fill the room. He moves to fulfill his ultimate purpose, though a part of him remains forever broken, shattered, and drowning in infinite regret.

"I will destroy Mastan. That is the sole meaning of my life now. But to find this meaning, I had to lose myself entirely. Now, I have absolutely nothing left to lose."
Yusibov's final plan is to annihilate Mastan in his own timeline. He sees Mastan's death as the master key to halting all his future machinations. This decision brings a brutal end to Yusibov's internal struggle, cementing his acceptance that there is no other way left to walk.

Core Stages of the Master Plan:
• Mastan's Death in His Own Era: Yusibov's primary objective is to kill Mastan in the present, rather than the future. The exact moment Mastan is killed, his ability to send Old Yusibov back in time to assault Arzu will be permanently eradicated. Thus, Mastan's temporal interference and the horrific threat to Arzu's fate will come to a definitive end.
• Altering the Flow of Time: Following Mastan's death, the entire flow of the timeline will shift. Mastan will no longer be able to execute his dark, futuristic machinations. The atrocities—like Old Yusibov being sent back to 2013 to implant the virus into Arzu's brain—will simply never happen. With Mastan dead, these future plans will be nullified before they are even born.
• A New Temporal Reality: The events leading up to Mastan's death are anchored to one specific timeline, but his assassination will birth an entirely new temporal reality. In this rewritten reality, Mastan's crime against Arzu, and Yusibov's own agonizing experiences, will be fundamentally different. To alter the course of time and save both himself and Arzu from this vile scheme, Yusibov must ensure Mastan dies in his own era.
• Arzu's Salvation: The most monumental consequence of Mastan's death will be Arzu's absolute liberation from the threat. Through this decisive intervention, Yusibov will have effectively rewritten Arzu's destiny. Mastan will never be able to weaponize Old Yusibov against the boy in 2013, thereby guaranteeing Arzu's safety once and for all.
It was the dead of night. A heavy rain was falling, and the city had settled into a deep, brooding silence. The dense, freezing dampness of the air only amplified the adrenaline surging through Yusibov's veins. His resolve was unshakable, though a profound tension still gripped his chest. He was ready for everything: he would make one final, fatal intervention to assassinate Mastan. He had already tracked the digital footprints and pinpointed the exact location of Mastan's fortified hideout.

Yusibov tightly gripped his old, sleek pistol. With a suppressor attached to the barrel, he calculated his every move with extreme caution, fully aware that a single misstep would trigger catastrophic consequences. For Yusibov, this had evolved into an existential mission—to eliminate Mastan and deliver Arzu from the looming nightmare.
Yusibov approached Mastan's compound. Step by step, he executed his premeditated strategy to breach the perimeter and neutralize the enemy's guards. The sound of the pouring rain washed over the surroundings, but Yusibov tuned it out entirely. His absolute focus was locked solely on his target behind those doors.
As he reached the front of the house, Yusibov spotted two of Mastan's guards. They were carrying out their patrol, completely unsuspicious, but against Yusibov's lethal speed and eerie silence, they stood absolutely no chance. He struck the first man from behind without warning, dropping him to the ground. The muffled thwip from the suppressor was barely audible over the rain. Noticing the second guard sense a disturbance, Yusibov moved like a phantom—before the man could even react, Yusibov was already behind him. He eliminated him swiftly and cleanly.
Now, the path was clear. Yusibov crept toward the bedroom where Mastan slept. The patter of the rain and the dead silence of the night made every passing second infinitely more agonizing. He had only a handful of seconds to rewrite his and Arzu's future. Without Mastan sensing a thing, Yusibov slipped into the room. The baron was fast asleep—the absolute perfect moment to strike.

Yusibov drew his pistol, listening to the rhythmic breathing of Mastan as he slept. After a few seconds of profound, heavy silence, Yusibov aimed directly at Mastan's head and executed him with a clean, blindingly swift shot. The muffled cough of the suppressed fire finalized the grim act. Mastan's life was extinguished. Standing over the lifeless body for a moment, Yusibov thought: "This is not the end, nor is it a beginning. It is simply salvation."
Yusibov understood that with Mastan's assassination, time had violently pivoted onto an entirely different path. All his actions, all his agonizing efforts, had thwarted the dark designs of the future and altered countless lives. Arzu had never been violated, and the nation had settled into a completely different, peaceful order. In this new reality, no one knew of Mastan or the lingering traces of his vile machinations.
A multitude of questions swirled in Yusibov's mind. "How real is all of this? Do these changes I've orchestrated exist only within my own

consciousness, or is the entire world now truly moving along a new trajectory?" – these thoughts weighed heavily upon his soul.
In this rewritten temporal reality, no one and nothing remembered what had transpired. Arzu lived a normal life; no footprint of Mastan or his criminal empire remained. The state existed in a tranquil era, far removed from wars and chaos. Yet, Yusibov alone remembered all these changes and deleted events. He carried the massive burden of his past temporal reality in his memory—every footstep, every event, Mastan's death, his own internal war, and the shifting of epochs.
For a fleeting moment, Yusibov felt lost all over again. "All these events feel like some kind of dream. Or perhaps... I never truly belonged to this era at all?" he pondered. For him, the absolute truth was nothing more than the contents of his own isolated memory. To the rest of the world, everything appeared as a fresh, untainted start, but Yusibov knew that in this new timeline, he was left with nothing but his own ghostly experiences and memories.
The questions Yusibov asked himself would never find complete answers. His life had entered a strange phase where no one else could feel the ripples of these alterations. Within a time melted away by the rain, he alone remembered the past, and this became his own unique, suffocating brand of isolation. Time had simply abandoned him to this solitude.
Yusibov could feel how drastically the flow of time had shifted and how distorted he was within this new reality, yet no person, no entity, could ever explain the true nature of this transformation to him. After a while, Yusibov accepted his fate—he was an anomaly, a divergent entity living in a world that wasn't entirely his. There was a history that no one else knew, lived and bled for only by him, along with all its lingering traumas...